

## **FLY IN FLY OUT GOVERNMENT MINISTERS 4 April 2007**

Have you even noticed a lear jet flying into land at Bunbury airport, it doesn't happen often but when it does you can bet your last tax dollar that it's a State Government Minister jetting in to woo the local voters. Of course in the good old days before there were 13 traffic lights and a conga line of B doubles between here and the start of freeway south, politicians used to drive themselves down here. Even if it was only as a Friday lunch stop off on the way to Margaret River for the long weekend but sadly even those days are now long gone

Today Ministers find it easier to send their driver south and just fly in to be met at the airport by their government car. Not that this is a problem as they are busy people and have a very important job to do running the State but I would prefer them to spend a little more time down here on the ground getting a feel for some of the issues we face rather than indulging us with a flying visit to ensure they end up on the local evening news.

On those days when we are honoured with a visit from an Honourable Minister the script is suspiciously predictable. Usually a tour is organised of a recently completed road project or the like, photos are taken, a speech is made to an invited crowd of the usual suspects, press releases are distributed and its all over within an hour bar the consumption of the complementary sandwiches and cakes. No doubt the Minister has announced the expenditure of millions of dollars over many many years which leaves the invited guests well impressed with the performance of the government as they munch contently on their free lunch.

Should the well fed crowd make even the slightest effort to look beyond the press release or reach back into their memory of past speeches and past free lunches then no doubt they would find that this grand new project that has just been announced has been around for a very long time. In fact this is the third time that they have heard a speech on the same project. There was the election promise breakfast, followed by the launch of the scoping study morning tea, followed by the launch of the draft plan lunch, followed by the budgetary announcement afternoon tea, followed by the ...you get the idea.

No wonder the lear jets are seen over Bunbury so often, it's the continualled announcement of the same project. I wonder how often we would see our Honourable Ministers if they were only allowed in the lear jet when it was time to actually come down and open the new road. The rest of the time they had to drive down.